CLAIMS

1. – 5 (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) A method of responding to an information request from a client device, the method including the steps of:

receiving the information request from the client device;

wrapping the information request in at least one layer to produce a request object;

transmitting the request object over a distributed network comprising a plurality of processing nodes;

at a first of said processing nodes, performing analysis of the information request stored on the request object to determine whether the first processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of a response data which is responsive to said information request, and adding a routing layer to the request object containing routing information relating to a next stage in processing of the request object whilst leaving said at least one layer of the request object intact and undisturbed, said first processing node determining the routing information contained in the routing layer in dependence upon only the request object content;

at a second of said processing nodes, performing analysis of the information request stored on the request object to determine whether said second processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of the response data which is responsive to said information request;

at least one of said first and second processing nodes processing the information request in the request object and generating at least part of the response data which is responsive to said information request and adding said response data to said request object; and

transmitting back to said client device via said distributed network said request object, including said response data, for responding to the information request;~~,~~

wherein the request object further includes said information request.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein the layers of the data object further include at least one layer selected from a group containing client

device information, user identification information, and application identification information.

9. (Previously Presented) A system for responding to an information request from a client device, the system including:

wrapping means configured to receive the information request from the client device and wrap the information request in at least one layer to produce a request object;

first and second processing nodes;

transmitting means configured to transmit the request object over a distributed network comprising each of said processing nodes;

wherein the first processing node is operable to perform analysis of the information request stored on the request object to determine whether the first processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of a response data which is responsive to the information request, and includes means configured to add a further layer to the request object containing routing information relating to a next stage in processing of the request packet to be performed at the second processing node whilst leaving said at least one layer of the request packet intact and undisturbed, the first processing node determining the routing information contained in the routing layer in dependence only upon the request object content;

wherein the second processing node is operable to perform analysis of the information request stored on the request object to determine whether said second processing node is able to process the information request and generate at least part of the response data which is responsive to said information request;

means for processing the information request in the request object at at least one of said first and second processing nodes to generate at least part of the response data which is responsive to said information request and for adding said response data to said request object; and

means for transmitting back to said client device via said distributed network said request object, including said response data, for responding to said information request, said request object including said information request.

10. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 9, wherein the layers of the data object further include at least one layer selected from a group containing client device information, user identification information, and application identification information.

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.